



*Office of Public Affairs  
U.S. Embassy, Wellington*

May 28, 2007

**AMBASSADOR MCCORMICK ADDRESS FOR MEMORIAL DAY**

Ambassador William McCormick  
Memorial Day Address.  
Old St. Paul's  
Monday, May 28, 2007

I can imagine on a Sunday any time between 1942 and 1945 - smartly dressed U.S. Marines, sailors or soldiers coming into Old St Paul's and sitting in here where we all are now. Welcomed by families of this congregation. Perhaps they were from the Anderson Park Camp above Bowen St, or Central Park on the way to Brooklyn; from the Kapiti Coast or on leave from Masterton or Auckland or Warkworth. They would be invited back for meals, experiencing true Kiwi hospitality and for a while at least, a sense of home.

In this past year the New Zealand American Association, in a demonstration of similar friendship provided parcels of food, magazines and grocery items that were sent to U.S. Marines serving in Afghanistan.

The staff at the U.S. Embassy was inspired by this effort and collected their own parcels and sent these (at the same time) to New Zealand's Provincial Reconstruction Team troops also serving in Afghanistan.

This small gesture was greatly appreciated by those serving in hostile and difficult conditions and I thank the New Zealand American Association for that initiative and also for holding this service today.

These thoughtful actions remind me of the connections that were extended mainly to U.S. Marines but also Navy, Army and Air Force personnel here in New Zealand during the Second World War.

The open heartedness of the New Zealand people provided our boys with what was, for so many, the last experience of kindness and happiness they would ever know.

New Zealand mothers would write to the parents of American servicemen to tell them their son had spent time in their homes and were safe. New Zealanders insisted the newspapers report the names of the American dead following campaigns such as the Battle for Tarawa. In that alone the Navy

losses were: 724 - the Marines 950. New Zealand *had to know* because these 'names' had become *family*.

Friends: boyfriends: and for some, husbands. Mrs. Flo Small here with us in the front row today, lost her sailor husband, Warren.

I have admired how the New Zealand government has honoured its New Zealand veterans and citizens through the series of oral history books that recalls and respects the stories of ordinary kiwis during World War II.

Last August I had the pleasure of attending the Prime Minister's launch of one of these – called "Beyond the Rising Sun". It included the oral histories of kiwi veterans in the Pacific and I was touched at how many stories connected with Americans - fighting together side by side.

It is a tribute to the United States and New Zealand friendship that the New Zealand government, through the great efforts of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust - has created an exhibition that recalls the time when U.S. Marines, Navy, Air Force and Army personnel were stationed here.

I am indeed honoured that the Prime Minister has agreed to open this exhibition - today of all days when the United States honours all its fallen servicemen and servicewomen. You do us a great honour today Prime Minister. Thank you.

It is important to turn our minds to the opportunities that have been given to us from these souls of the past and recent times. To ask ourselves "are we living up to the opportunity that has been offered us?"

Personally I am inspired by what happens in New Zealand that focuses on the maintenance of the peace - particularly as it affects this region.

New Zealand's peace keeping forces are in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. The United States is grateful for New Zealand's leadership in the South Pacific and just three weeks ago, addressing these issues at a conference of Pacific Island Nation leaders in Washington; Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stressed "Maintaining security and stability in the Pacific region is crucial to the interest of every country and every territory represented in this room, including the United States."

It would not have made any sense for the youth of America and its allies in the 1940s to have forced out one dictatorial power then, for inattention on our part to allow for the rise of failed Pacific states and suffering by their innocent citizens.

So perhaps the work of those who have come before us remains incomplete. They pass to us a period of peace. It is up to us to handle it with care and attention.

Time has passed and the World War II camps have gone. Many sites such as at Queen Elizabeth Park have fitting memorials erected by caring New Zealanders. Roses now grow where the Anderson Park camp was and tennis is played on the land that was the camp at Central Park.

U.S. Marine Veterans themselves erected their own memorial which faces the sea on the edge of Wellington Harbour. It reads "To the people of New Zealand, if you ever need a friend you have one..."

It is with a sad heart that we remember those who have given their lives but I recall the reasons why it is good for us to reflect on their sacrifice with these words:

They have died so that we may **learn** to keep the peace.

They have died so that we may **look** for truth and work together for a better world.

They have died so that we may **love** one another in peace with gratitude.

They have died so that we may **live**.